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DEAN’S DIARY
THE VERY REVEREND PROFESSOR SARAH FOOT

As the busy Trinity Term recedes, there is finally time to reflect on what has been an important few months in the history of Christ Church.

I am honoured to be the first female Dean of Christ Church. As we approach the 500th anniversary of the foundation of Cardinal College, there is much to be done to celebrate all that we have achieved in both College and Cathedral over the centuries, and much to do to secure the institution’s future success.

To that end, you will notice that this issue of Christ Church Matters has a fresh new look. This is the result of a significant rebranding exercise, in which we have aligned the Cathedral and College more closely. Based on a 1960s illustration of the Wolsey crest discovered in our Archives, the beautifully redrawn heraldry is accompanied by a modern wordmark and typography, which we hope signifies the ways in which we continue to look both forwards and backwards.

Alongside the usual rhythm of Trinity Term, with revision, exams, the Joint Schools dinner and the Going Down party to celebrate our Junior Members, the Governing Body and Chapter have been scrutinising the Governance Review carried out by Dominic Grieve KC. We are pleased to have made significant progress in considering some of the headline recommendations, and our work will continue over the summer and into Michaelmas term.

This issue of Christ Church Matters draws together news from across the Christ Church community. It reports on recent research activities, news from the student Common Rooms, and the ‘Horizons’ outreach programme. The work of Cathedral volunteers, the restoration of Mercury in Tom Quad, and this year’s Tower Poetry winners also feature. Contributions from alumni address the challenges posed by ‘fake news’ and the potential of AI, while ‘Association news’ includes the moving tribute to Simon Offen that was read at his Memorial Service.

I hope that you have a restorative and enjoyable summer, and I look forward to seeing many of you at Christ Church events over the coming months.
During Trinity term, the Library celebrated the return to Christ Church of a copy of the first English edition of Euclid’s *Elements* (1570). In the late-16th and early-17th centuries, it became a requirement for Junior Members, on achieving their BA, to purchase a book for the Library. This could be an expensive demand for young men at the start of their careers and it was not uncommon for a number of graduates to club together.

The Collections record for William Grenville, son of Prime Minister George Grenville. William came up in 1777 and clearly studied Euclid in his first and second years, tackling the geometry volumes of Book 3 during Michaelmas term 1777 and Books 4-6 and 11 in Hilary term 1778.

Title page of the 1533 edition of Euclid, the first printed edition, in Greek, and published in Basle. It is in Charles Boyle’s collection in the Library, given in 1733.
This was precisely what happened with this volume: nine students contributed and their names recorded on the title page (see https://www.chch.ox.ac.uk/news/library-and-archives/rare-book-donated-1587-returns-christ-church-after-300-years).

In the years immediately after the Restoration, maths and geometry were read in conjunction with astronomy and as a subset of logic. The Dean and Chapter encouraged the study of maths: although it was not established until much later, they accepted Richard Busby’s proposal of a mathematical lectureship in 1667, and Aldrich’s own book on Euclid was going through the press at the time of his death in 1710. David Gregory, Savilian Professor of Astronomy, proposed in 1703 a course of study that included Euclid with trigonometry, algebra, mechanics, ‘captoptricks and dioptricks’, and astronomy. It was Gregory’s son, Dean David Gregory, who brought Busby’s maths lectureship to actuality in the 1760s and suddenly the study of mathematics became very popular, its presence in the records of collections increasing substantially. An undergraduate’s lecture lists from this period show the provision of courses in mechanics, optics, hydrostatics, pneumatics, astronomy and Euclidean geometry. Euclid had become one of the most studied authors on the curriculum, read alongside Colin Maclaurin’s Treatise of Algebra and Hugh Hamilton’s work on conic sections.

Euclid could also be used as a punishment! Dean Markham (1767–77) had to deal with a particularly difficult case when a student was accused of ‘flagrant ... lewdness and immorality’ and of bringing both himself and College into disrepute. He was to be sent down but his tutors appealed on his behalf so his expulsion was revoked: instead he was rusticated with a long list of tasks to perform before he could return. Along with abridging the works of Herodotus, working out all the examples in Maclaurin’s Algebra, taking notes on all of the epistles of St Paul as well as the last 100 Psalms (in Hebrew), and translating Thomas Sherlock’s sermons into Latin, was a requirement that he master (and prove at a public oral examination) the fifth, sixth, 11th, and 12th Books of Euclid’s Elements (Books 5 and 6 on plane geometry, and 11 and 12 on solid geometry).

The Greek was also known to strike fear into undergraduates before their examinations. Mr Gaskell, an early 19th-century student, admitted in a letter home that he had sat up all night before his viva to master his geometry, reading ‘as if my life depended on my diligence... triangles, parallelograms, and angles I understand pretty well, but these diabolical circles in the third book are so like one another that I hope on my accounts as well as theirs, we shall not come into close contact tomorrow.’ Conic sections made an appearance at George Chinnery’s first-day interview with the Dean in 1808.

It was at this time that mathematics became the first subject that could be studied as a separate topic from the traditional catch-all bachelors’ LitHum degree based so heavily on classical texts. It formed part of the BA degree from 1800 and became a separate, voluntary examination in 1807. It was this additional test that afforded Robert Peel (later to be MP for the University and then Prime Minister) his, and the first ever, double-first.
Hugo van der Goes is not an artist whose name is familiar to art lovers today, but during his lifetime (1440–82/3) and for generations afterwards his fame was of a calibre that a simple reference to his first name was enough to warrant recognition. It was simply 'Hugo' – like Leonardo, Raphael and Michelangelo, or more of the moment: Beyoncé. The reasons for this lack of current recognition are the extreme rarity of his works and their exclusively religious subject matter. The average museum visitor will not remember his name, despite one of his surviving masterpieces, the Portinari Altarpiece, being displayed in one of the world’s most-visited galleries, the Uffizi in Florence. By the time one has fought one’s way through Botticellis, Raphaels and Leonardos another chef-d’oeuvre is not fathomable, and certainly not one by a 15th-century artist from Ghent. Nonetheless, the arrival of the Portinari Altarpiece in the city in 1483 had such an impact that it changed Florentine painting forever.
The scarcity of Hugo van der Goes’ surviving oeuvre – only around thirteen paintings and two drawings are attributed to him today – has also been explained by the religious intensity of his images. Their intrinsic power was so overwhelming that they were amongst the first to be destroyed by iconoclasts in the Low Countries. Now an exhibition at the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin (Hugo van der Goes, Between Pain and Bliss) attempts to resurrect his first-name fame and reputation, and two of our works are part of this endeavour.

Christ Church Picture Gallery is in the exceptional position of having a painting and a drawing by the master: a painted fragment of a Lamentation of Christ or of The Large Descent from the Cross (c.1475/80), tempera and oil (?) on linen (‘Tüchlein’), Christ Church Picture Gallery.

“The fragment of the Lamentation (or of The Large Descent from the Cross, as the full composition is often referred to) shows in its entirety the dead body of Christ surrounded by the usual protagonists. The lifeless body has just been taken down from the cross and lies heavily in the arms of Joseph of Arimathea who almost presents it to the viewer, while St John, Mary, Mary Magdalen and Nicodemus stare at it in varying forms of their own grief. It is a well-known and widely-depicted scene in Western art, but Hugo reinvents it. He brings the group to the edge of the picture frame, zooming into their faces and thoughts and in doing so makes the viewer a participant in their grief.”

The drawing is the rarest of items in collectors’ terms. No other drawing of this size and kind of any Northern European artist of the fifteenth century exists. The fragment, too, is a work of exception – and the myriad of copies after it, still produced even a century past its creation, are testimony to its fame. (Some years ago, a Christ Church alumnus brought one of the versions to the Picture Gallery. He had just taken it along while coming to a Gaudy thinking it might be of some interest to me. It turned out to become just one of those unforgettable moments.)
the universally understandable, unbearable pain of a mother crying over the violent death of her child. The pictorial language Hugo uses combines elements of high realism (a glistening tear) with an abstraction of space (a golden boxed-up background). This duality of naturalistic detail within a disorientating space only heightens the distressing feeling of loss that activates empathy in the viewer.

The drawing of Rachel and Jacob presents a different kind of pictorial story telling. Hugo lays out his composition on a dark grey prepared paper with pen and brush and then carefully models the light areas with a pattern of white highlights. Here he zooms out of the scene and shows his main figures in full length standing in a landscape surrounded by farm animals. The vast landscape also means he creates enough space to allude to other episodes of this complex biblical story (Genesis 29) with its deeply flawed characters. Old Testament subjects were depicted less-often and Hugo had to invent his own format and focus. Centre-stage is Jacob's recognition of his love for Rachel and the moment when he kisses her and cries. Despite betrayals, jealousies, injustices and a whole range of human errors and divine interventions and punishments the narrative leads, in religious terms, to the desired outcome. Why did Hugo take on this rarely-visualised subject of multiple human frailty and a love so deep that it angered god?

Some think the answer lies in the master’s own experience and his sensitivity for the human condition. In the 19th century, interest in Hugo van der Goes surged after documents describing his battle with episodes of severe mental illness were discovered. Gaspar Ofhuys, a fellow brother in the monastery that the artist had entered as a lay brother, had recorded the episodes in the monastery’s chronicle. The publication of these by the Belgian historian Alphonse Wauters and a subsequent monumental painting titled, The Madness of Hugo van der Goes, by Emile Wauters (1872) manifested the myth that still prevails, that mental suffering is linked to creative genius and Hugo became the myth’s prime example. This myth was further enforced by Vincent van Gogh who identified with this visionary artist due to these accounts.

The exhibition in Berlin also explores this myth-building around Hugo van der Goes, while showing all but two of the known works by him. The Portinari Altarpiece from the Uffizi and Trinity Panels from Edinburgh, with portraits of James III, King of Scots and his Queen, Margaret of Denmark, were too frail to travel. The Picture Gallery played a significant part in the success of the show and we too hope that it will introduce a wider audience to this exceptional artist.
Hugo van der Goes, The Portinari Altarpiece (c 1475), oil on wood. The triptych was commissioned by Tommaso Portinari, representing the Adoration of the Shepherds. Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

Hugo van der Goes, The Adoration of the Kings (Monforte Altar) (c 1470), oil on wood. Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin.

Emile Wauters (1846–1933), The Madness of Hugo van der Goes (1872), oil on canvas. Hugo in his declining years in the Augustinian Priory at Rouge-Cloître, Brussels. Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium.
High in the Pyrenees, partly submerged in the gravel of an abandoned ravine a few kilometres above the Camino de Santiago, lies the church of the ninth-century monastery of San Adrián de Sasabe. This curious site tells the story of a medieval environmental crisis caused by the overexploitation of the valley’s natural resources. As the settlers expanded into the hills above, they scrambled to cut trees for firewood, and unwittingly destabilised the soils beneath their feet. Soon, the mountain storms would wash a torrent of gravel down the gorge, burying the rural settlement to a depth exceeding twenty metres. Having lain dormant for over 800 years, it was only in the 1950s that these legendary ruins were unearthed, to bear witness to the enduring power of nature over human lives.

In the present time, our environmental problems are different, but no less complex. Anthropogenic climate change, for which the evidence is unequivocal, now causes more severe droughts and more frequent floods in many regions of the world. Similarly, the current drought in the Horn of Africa, which members of my research group, including Oxford geographer Dr Solomon Gebrechorkos, have shown has worsened for three consecutive years. Yet the crisis response is drastically hampered by conflict in Ethiopia; without the infrastructure, technical knowledge or institutional stability to respond effectively, communities in many regions struggle to adapt.

Understanding these environmental challenges requires natural scientists to work alongside social researchers; and this is where geographers can play their part. Bringing data from novel field instrumentation and satellite sensors, we can not only quantify immediate threats to lives and livelihoods,
“Bringing data from novel field instrumentation and satellite sensors, we can not only quantify immediate threats to lives and livelihoods, but also help local communities adapt to longer-term change.”

but also help local communities adapt to longer-term change. For example, using the European Union’s Copernicus constellation of satellites, Christ Church’s geographers have monitored vegetation health in East Africa using novel machine-learning techniques to detect incipient crop failure. We have created new predictive models to track floods across the globe and to forecast dwindling water supplies at planetary scale. Indeed, the product of my own recent £10m UKRI-funded research programme is a new, open-source model of the terrestrial water cycle, constructed in collaboration with the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, the National Centre for Atmospheric Sciences, the British Geological Survey and the National Centre for Earth Observation. This model is now running routinely on the UK’s fastest supercomputers, providing additional predictive capability to weather forecasters and supporting the work of more than 120 graduate students in over 40 countries.

The University’s global reach helps engage communities beyond academia at home and overseas. In September 2022, we welcomed fellow scientists from leading international environmental research centres to agree protocols for open access to data and models to foster collaboration. Next September, via the Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office’s REACH programme, we will host an international conference of scientists, researchers and politicians with representatives from regions most in need of overseas development assistance including Kenya, Ethiopia and Bangladesh. Together, these delegates will come to Oxford to share insights on how our new forecasting capabilities can most benefit the communities in greatest need of information on impending natural hazards, and on which to base long-lived planning and investment decisions for infrastructure to support future economic development.

Such exchanges work both ways. They bring new perspectives to Oxford and provide excellent opportunities for our colleagues and students to broaden their collaborative networks. For example, working with the Met Office, graduate student Marcus Buechel has been projecting the impact of widespread tree planting on floods and droughts, finding that despite the potential to sequester atmospheric carbon, we must safeguard against the unintended reduction in water tables caused by newly planted forests. At the same time, Junior Research Fellow Dr Anya Leenman has worked with Google’s Earth Engine to track the episodic migration of river systems with unprecedented detail using satellite data across the globe. Moreover, with the same data we can now detect the onset of slow-moving debris flows in the monsoon-prone Himalayas of Nepal, as pioneered by Oxford researcher Dr Max van Wyk de Vries. There is therefore much to keep a geographer busy in the 21st century and beyond. The subject continues to prove as popular as ever, especially amongst our undergraduates, graduate students and researchers who enjoy an interdisciplinary college at the forefront of environmental scholarship.
It's 1912, and the tune they're singing is 'The March of the Women', the anthem of the Women’s Social and Political Union, the militant suffrage organisation founded in 1903 by the Pankhurs. And the woman conducting is none other than the March’s composer, Ethel Smyth, who had been imprisoned alongside her lover Emmeline Pankhurst while on one of the WSPU’s window-smashing campaigns.

Born in 1858, Dame Dr Ethel Smyth was quite an extraordinary woman. In a society in which it was expected that women, if they composed at all, should write small-scale, “feminine” pieces such as lullabies and love songs, Smyth defied all conventions. She was the composer of six operas, the first woman to have an opera staged at the Metropolitan Opera in New York (and remained, until 2016, the only woman to do so), the first British woman to be awarded a Damehood for her services to music, recipient of no fewer than three honorary doctorates, and additionally the author of 11 books. As one astonished critic put it, Smyth blew ‘to blazes’ the idea that women couldn’t compose. ‘She strode through the “closed shop” of the composers’ world without a thought for feminine propriety.’

Unusual Smyth may have been, but she was not a lone female voice in Britain’s male-dominated musical world. Among her most notable colleagues were the composer and violist Rebecca Clarke (1886–1979), composer and pianist Dorothy Howell (1898–1982), and film composer Doreen Carwithen (1922–2003). Together, they have been the focus of my JRF research and are now the subjects of my first book, a group biography called Quartet: How Four Women Changed the Musical World. By bringing their stories together, Quartet tells a history of the last 150 years of British music that is focused on women’s experiences, analysing the obstacles that women faced when pursuing musical careers, and exploring the ways that they found to manage these challenges and assert their agency in a world where the odds were stacked against their success.

These women lived lives that should be remembered, and wrote music that deserves to be heard. Their works are far less often performed than those by their colleagues Elgar, Vaughan Williams and Britten, for example, but they have so much to offer listeners, from Smyth’s barnstorming score for her third opera, The Wreckers, to the tenderness of Howell’s lyrical violin sonata. I’m delighted that the book’s positive reception is leading to many performances of their music, and I’m touring throughout the UK for the rest of the year presenting concerts of the music from Quartet with artists including violinist Fenella Humphreys. Students on my music and gender course have organised no less than the world premiere of Smyth’s first major choral work, The Song of Love, which was performed in Christ Church Cathedral in May this year.

All four women faced gender prejudice in their day that led to their music being sidelined, ignored, or in some instances ridiculed. When Clarke’s 1919 Viola Sonata was “rediscovered” in 1977, the New York Times admitted that ‘had she not been a woman composer’, Clarke ‘might be heard more today.’ Currently, a lot of my research involves collaborating with musicians on performances and recordings – in some cases world premiere recordings – to bring this music out of archives and homes and into concert halls again. Because there is still a lot of work to be done to redress the result of historical prejudices, only 7.7% of orchestral music worldwide is written by women and this situation will not improve without
the scores, recordings and performances needed to make women’s music accessible. However there is now, thankfully, a broad recognition that historical prejudices have denied listeners vast swathes of truly excellent music, and there is widespread enthusiasm for discovering, performing and recording little-known works that expand our understanding of what classical music has been and can be. Maybe, a century after Smyth wrote that women’s music was squashed by the ‘temptation to pretend that women are non-existent musically’, their time has come.

Quartet: How Four Women Changed the Musical World is available to buy from all good bookstores.

To purchase tickets for Quartet events, please visit leahbroad.com/events. You can follow Leah’s work on Twitter @LeahBroad, or via her Substack leahbroad.substack.com. If you would like to discuss supporting recordings and performances of music by British women coming out of Leah’s research, please email Leah: leah.broad@chch.ox.ac.uk.

“There is widespread enthusiasm for discovering, performing, and recording little-known works that expand our understanding of what classical music has been and can be.”
Christ Church Cathedral has more than 400 volunteers, active in every part of the Cathedral’s ministry. From the Flower Arrangers to the Embroiderers, the Cathedral Singers to one of the Stewards who makes the Easter garden each year, all sorts of gifts and talents are put into service for the sake of the building and its ministry. Many of these operate unseen and unnoticed but are nonetheless vital for the smooth running of our community. We are very grateful for all the work that is faithfully carried out during the year. One of the more public-facing roles is that of Cathedral Guides – a group of men and women who share their carefully acquired knowledge of the Cathedral’s history and architecture with some of the thousands of visitors who enter our doors each year. This year, Miranda Hockliffe (Cathedral Volunteer & Visitor Coordinator) has initiated a structured programme of lectures and practical instruction for the training and development of new and existing Guides.

Over 12 weeks, the Guides have heard experts on all sorts of topics relevant to the history and development of the Cathedral. Among the speakers were College Archivist Judith Curthoys, who lectured on Cardinal College and the King’s Cathedral, President of the Oxfordshire Architectural and Historical Society Geoffrey Tyack, who discussed the restoration by George Gilbert Scott, and Ruth Buckley, who shared her in-depth knowledge of the origins of the Frideswide legends and the early buildings on this site. In addition, the Guides have received practical training on guiding, and given regular opportunities to deliver, timed talks of their own. The training concluded with a Commissioning Evensong, on Saturday 20 May at 6pm, at which all Volunteers were thanked for their contribution to Cathedral life.

When this programme of talks and tours was devised, we always intended to offer it to a wider audience following the Guides’ training. From May this year a spring series of sessions, called ‘Exploring the Cathedral’, was held offering a similar programme (but without the practical training!). There will be an autumn series too so that more people can enjoy exploring the Cathedral with us. All are welcome to attend. Places will be limited, so, if you are interested, please contact Miranda Hockliffe (miranda.hockliffe@chch.ox.ac.uk).
As cathedral choirs across the UK continue to rebuild after the upheavals of the COVID-19 pandemic, Frideswide Voices – the girls’ choir at Christ Church – continues to go from strength to strength.

Initially, recruitment during the various lockdowns was challenging; the team ran our usual open days online, with copious question and answer sessions, and online rehearsals, offering prospective choristers and their families a glimpse of choir membership. Despite our concerns about recruiting like this – not to mention our worries about how to train our new crop of seven-year-olds online – the last few years have seen an ever-increasing number of families interested in choristership, and we have been blessed with several years of the Choir being very over-subscribed.

Frideswide Voices now numbers 30 girls aged 7–14, drawn from more than 20 schools across Oxford. Girls travel from as far away as Buckingham to sing at Christ Church, coming to the Cathedral two or three times a week for lessons, rehearsals, and services with the Lay and Academical Clerks. In addition to a great deal of input from the Cathedral musicians, the choristers also receive tuition from their own team of specialist teachers, including theory and singing lessons and a range of workshops. Twice-yearly intensive courses held at the Cathedral School offer a chance for the girls to focus entirely on their singing, and to spend valuable social time together as a team.

The range of services with which the girls are involved also continues to grow: for the first time, they have sung at Midnight Mass and the Easter Vigil services this year. At Christmas, they contributed to carol services for the Friends of the Cathedral, Thames Valley Police, and Helen and Douglas House Hospice, as well as holding their own service of Nine Lessons and Carols. In Holy Week, the girls joined the boy choristers and clerks for Christ Church’s annual performance of Bach’s *St John Passion* – a powerful and profound experience for any young singer. The choristers also continue to contribute to those services which fall outside the regular pattern of the Cathedral’s diary, including the pilgrimage and Patronal Festival services during our annual commemoration of St Frideswide, in October and the series of Lenten compline services held in the lead up to Holy Week.

Recent trips beyond Oxford have included visits to Exeter and, more recently, a week-long tour to Ripon, County Durham and Edinburgh. The Choir is also fortunate to be invited to perform at a wide variety of events beyond Christ Church, and have enjoyed performances of Mendelssohn’s *Elijah* and Bach’s *St Matthew Passion* with local choirs and orchestras. We look forward eagerly to celebrating the Choir’s tenth anniversary in 2024, alongside our growing community of alumnae, chorister parents and supporters. ■
BRANDING CHRIST CHURCH

SARAH BUDZIER
HEAD OF COMMUNICATIONS

Regular readers of Christ Church Matters will notice some new design elements in this edition, the culmination of substantial work to update our visual identity.

The project began in 2022, when the newly-formed Communications Team was tasked with creating a new website for the Foundation – which will be launched later this year.

A review of the existing assets uncovered a variety of crests drawn and redrawn over the years, and while some were digitised, none was in high quality. The Christ Church font – a cut of Garamond – was well-loved by many, but better suited to letterpress than digital applications, with its soft serifs, exaggerated italic and high cap height. No record had been kept of uniform colour schemes, and meanwhile the Cathedral had adopted a brand identity all of its own.

Once the decision had been made to represent the whole Foundation under the arms of Cardinal Wolsey, a search of the Archive uncovered a crest beautifully illustrated by Betty Stuart Miller in 1968. This coat of arms, with rich colours and exquisite details, was bound in a volume by Sangorski and Sutcliffe, a firm of bookbinders established in London in 1901 and considered to be one of the most important bookbinding companies of the 20th century.

Andy Goode, Artistic Director at SomeOne In London, was tasked with rendering the illustration for digital and print applications, creating a variety of detailed and simplified drawings. From these, he went on to isolate some of the elements, including the Cornish choughs, leopards, lion and rose, and develop these into both individual motifs and beautiful watermarks. A suite of readable fonts and thoughtful colour palettes has also evolved from the work, which we hope will give Christ Church a distinctive and harmonious visual language in print, digital media and signage, with which to look to the next 500 years.
Examples of the new branding in use for publications, digital marketing, and merchandise.
One thing that has always struck me about this JCR – and indeed the reason I wanted to run for the role of President – is the ability of its members to come together and support one another in trying times. For many members of the JCR, this year was an incredibly difficult one, as we very sadly lost one of our beloved members, Colin Dowling (2022, Classics). I have been truly heartened and touched by the response of students in the wake of this tragedy, and everyone’s efforts to raise one another’s spirits, to offer a kind word and to comfort each other have been truly exemplary. I think it is testament to the love everyone shares for Colin that students’ responses have been mature and incredibly poignant. This JCR has always been a community for its members, and I hope it will continue to act this way in years to come.

The community spirit Christ Church JCR enjoys has also allowed us to take advantage of some much happier moments this year, in a full return to normality. The annual Christmas tree lighting, accompanied by mulled wine and singing from the Oxford Alternatives, was a great occasion for everyone to come together and enjoy some festive fun before Oxmas dinner. Indeed, I think my fond memories of the snowy evening of the annual Advent Carol Service will stay with me for a while – the night was truly magical, and such a lovely opportunity for families to come and enjoy college with students. The tireless efforts of the JCR reps, and their willingness to work for the benefit of students, did not go unnoticed – and we also saw the return of many much-loved events, such as Jazz and Wine in the picture gallery and welfare ice-skating trips. This year also saw the return of the annual sports exchange with Trinity College, Cambridge (thanks to the JCR sports reps, Thomas Douglas and Natalie Shah which). It was an amazing day, full of good-spirited competition and a sociable formal afterwards. The Boat Club also enjoyed much success this year, not only with the men’s first boat being crowned Head of the River, but also the entire Boat Club engaged with the wider college community to hold a ‘row-a-thon’ during the inaugural Christ Church giving day.

What has been made clear in my mind as I round up this year is that the members of this college stand together in times of difficulty. This year has been no different. As exams approached for many of our members, and their social calendars died down, I was comfortable in the knowledge that they would still be able to enjoy the smaller moments with their fellow students at Christ Church, who give the JCR its spirit and have always fostered a welcoming, kind and warm culture.
As the Graduate Common Room continues to evolve into its post-pandemic form, I find myself reflecting on the temporality of institutional memory even in a place as steeped in tradition as the House. Whilst I believe we do have a duty to acknowledge and grow from our traditional roots, in the brave new world the COVID-19 virus has given us, we also find a unique opportunity to look forward and shape what the next 500 years of our history might look like. Thomas Cardinal Wolsey’s vision for his College was very much shaped in the model of humanist learning, which itself emerged from times of catastrophic plague.

Though very much younger than Wolsey’s college, the GCR has shown similar signs of new growth and innovation over the past year – ably guided by my predecessors through the worst of the pandemic and the growing pains of re-emerging from it. The past year has been chock-full of rewarding events, showing that even in the thick of conducting research on the cutting edge of our fields, postgraduates can – and indeed need to – take time to socialise, pursue hobbies, give back to the community and (occasionally) party.

For example, in the past year, the GCR has hosted more than 70 social events, exchanged with 13 Oxford colleges and (uniquely among other Oxford common rooms) two Cambridge colleges for formals, and hosted 11 special guest dinners. Our tireless officers have also run numerous special events: from a drinks reception celebrating International Women’s Day to a cozy Advent carol singalong in the Cathedral accompanied by mulled wine and holiday treats, and from springtime garden tours and talks on sustainability to concerts produced and performed by GCR members alongside internationally acclaimed artists.

The GCR has also enjoyed an especially collaborative year with the wider college community. In Michaelmas, the GCR raised £371.45 for the House’s first-ever Giving Day to support the creation of an Academic Refugee Futures Scholarship funding a DPhil student displaced by conflict, persecution, or other serious human rights violations and deprivations. In Hilary, GCR members participated in a talk and networking event with alumni involved in a wide variety of successful ventures hosted by The Entrepreneur’s Circle (TEC) and the Development & Alumni Office. In Trinity, we have worked closely with our colleagues in the JCR to put on ambitious Arts Week and Mental Health Awareness Week programmes with multiple events every day running the gamut of arts disciplines represented by members of the House and reaffirming our commitment to welfare in the wake of a particularly difficult academic year.

As the year wraps up, we have been reminded once again of Christ Church’s ongoing place in the stream of history with the Coronation of King Charles III, our Visitor; our recently revived relations with the BA Society of our sister royal foundation, Trinity College Cambridge, as well as with HM Chapel Royal, Hampton Court Palace; and the installation of The Very Revd Canon Professor Sarah Foot, Censor Theologiae and Regius Professor of Ecclesiastical History as the first female Dean of Christ Church. I am very pleased to serve as President of the GCR in these historic times and, whilst I keep an eye to our past and our traditions, I very much look forward to ensuring our vibrant postgraduate community continues to play an active role in the growth and progress of the House as it strides into the future.
“THIS TRIP HAS OPENED MY EYES”
CHRIST CHURCH’S ‘HORIZONS PROGRAMME’ IN ACTION

LILA CHERRIH
LEAD TEACHER FOR HISTORY, WHITEFIELD SCHOOL

As a Year 10 student, it can be hard knowing what your academic future holds. It’s an age at which students often think about the future in terms of vocations – wanting to be a doctor, footballer, lawyer, architect, and so on.

Other times, they are directionless and have little idea of what steps to take once their GCSEs are behind them. Despite this, it is a critical juncture in a student’s education. For many, the end of Year 10 is a crossroads between securing GCSEs that will open doors to future success, and underachievement and disappointment come Year 11 results day.

It’s with this in mind that we took twelve Year 10 History students to visit Oxford University as part of Christ Church’s Horizons Programme. The Programme aims to help develop students’ knowledge of the benefits of university, the wide range of course options available, and some key considerations in making informed future choices.

The day began with a session on University and Future Choices, followed by a question and answer session with three current Humanities students. Our students enquired about a wide range of topics, including what they enjoy most about their university experience so far, the challenges they have faced and how they’ve overcome them, and their reaction to receiving their Oxford offers, back in Year 13. The questions posed were mature and reflective. They prompted some thoughtful discussions, particularly on the importance of time management and hard work.

The students were treated to lunch in Christ Church’s famous hall (the inspiration for that at Harry Potter’s Hogwarts) – and the blueberry cheesecake was a particular hit amongst the students! The afternoon was spent having three academic taster sessions on Classical Archaeology, Geography and Poetry. The students especially enjoyed deconstructing the meaning behind some Ancient Greek pottery depicting headless horses, Goddess Athena and Heracles fighting the Nemean lion. Finally, we toured the college grounds before finishing off the day at another Oxford institution, G&D’s ice cream parlour (across the road from Christ Church), with ex-Whitefield student – and now second-year Oxford student – Sara.

Our students demonstrated exemplary behaviour and were praised for their engagement and maturity throughout the day. Most importantly, however, many of the students left thinking differently about their future options. One noted, “If you’d asked me a week ago whether I wanted to go to university, I’d have said no. Now I really do want to go” – a sentiment echoed by many on the coach back. ‘Inspiring’, ‘motivating’, and ‘informative’ are just a handful of words used by students to describe the day.

A final thought. Over lunch, one student asked me if I thought any of the group had the potential to go to Oxford University one day. I said that I truly believed they all did and that this was why they had been invited to take part in the Horizons Programme. As the last few years have proven, students from Whitefield School are more than capable of competing at the highest academic levels to secure offers to study at world-leading universities, such as Oxford. For these Year 10 students, the next step will be to knuckle down ahead of their first GCSE mocks this summer and to lay the groundwork for fantastic results this time next year.
Jerome Lawrie
Treasurer

The statue of Mercury in Tom Quad was installed in 1928, a gift to Christ Church from Harold Bompas (1881). It is a freely adapted version in lead of Giovanni da Bologna’s bronze statue of Mercury in the Louvre.

The Christ Church statue rests on a base that is the puff of wind blown out by a putto head, which in turn sits on a pedestal designed by Lutyens. He replaced a previous Mercury statue, which was torn down in 1817 in an undergraduate ‘frolic’ led by the 14th Earl of Derby, subsequently Prime Minister. The head of that statue of Mercury can now be seen in the Library.

Mercury is an intriguing figure for the centre of the college as the Roman god of financial gain, commerce, eloquence, messages, communication (including divination), travellers, boundaries, luck, trickery, and thieves; he also serves as the guide of souls to the underworld.

By late last year, the current statue had developed a distinct lean, and historic repairs to his standing leg were opening up.

With the pond under repair, it seemed a good opportunity to entrust Mercury to a conservation specialist and Cliveden Conservation was retained to remove him. They engaged Rupert Harris Conservation Ltd to carry out the restoration work at in their studio in London.

Calcium deposits were first removed from the surface of the lead using low-pressure steam and an acidic gel cleaner. Test holes were then drilled into the lower leg to determine the construction method. It was ascertained that the calf was hollow and the thigh was solid lead. Cuts were made into the calf to expose the armature in the area that was distorted. A square brass bar made up the single piece of armature running through the leg. Small adjustments were made to the armature until the sculpture was deemed to be standing in the correct position. Panels removed from the calf section were then reinstated and the seams lead welded. Mercury’s left arm was found to be in an incorrect position and was moved further away from the torso – any cuts that were required to achieve this were lead welded. An extension to the caduceus (extending from the bottom of the hand) was turned in bronze and fitted to the existing bronze thread. The caduceus was primed, top-coated in yellow and gilded with two coats of 24-carat gold leaf restoring him to his original 1928 condition. Following cleaning, the copper washers used below the fixing nuts were found to be old one penny coins that had been drilled. These were reinstated using the existing fixings and nuts.

Mercury was put back onto his pedestal on 17 February 2023 and is now resplendent with remodelled fountains framing his handsome torso.

Scaffolding surrounds the statue in Tom Quad.
Repair work is undertaken on Mercury’s standing leg.
TOWER POETRY COMPETITION

The 2023 Tower Poetry prizegiving took place on 19 April in Christ Church. This year’s theme was ‘The Planets’, which inspired over 1700 entries – more than double the number submitted for last year’s competition. The judges were Julia Copus, Gail McConnell, and Peter McDonald. They were joined by the Lord Mayor of Oxford, as well as members of the Tower Family, for the prize giving.

This was Peter McDonald’s last prizegiving, having been the Christopher Tower Student for 24 years. Professor McDonald said: “Poetry isn’t for everybody, true. And appreciating poetry, or being able to write it for that matter, doesn’t make anyone a better person: it never has done. Yet excellence always matters – excellence that exists quite apart from our demands upon it, or our preconceptions about what it must look like.”

He added: “Will the poem that stands alone, learning from tradition whilst contributing to that very tradition, effecting original transformations of what has been loved and understood in poetry of the past, survive as a mode where young people discover the power of language and the strength of thought? I think it will.”

This year’s winners were:
- First prize (£5,000), Esther Keeley – ‘The Flâneur’
- Second prize (£3,000), Liv Goldreich – ‘Orbit’
- Third Prize (£1,500), Elise Withey – ‘Future of Space Travel c 1783’

A further ten entries were awarded a commendation (they are available here: https://www.chch.ox.ac.uk/news/research-and-academia/winners-2023-christopher-tower-poetry-competition-announced).

ESTHER KEELEY First Prize – 2023 Tower Poetry Competition, ‘The Planets’

The Flâneur

You float through this atmosphere like it’s a mirror or a lake
where you dilute your consciousness and go swimming,
turning

like a corkscrew, or a tube of lipstick, or the ribbon
that your mother used to tie the ends of your plaits with.

Coiled and then unfurling, time
lapsed, a familiar film, a stop motion spin.

You let the planets govern you like gods
that you can see but never hold —

waiting for new life like the silence between heartbeats,
you carve out a space for new holiness

and it looks an awful lot like a constellation
and did you know that the word planets comes from
the Greek planetai

Other winning entries are available to read here:
https://www.chch.ox.ac.uk/research-and-academia/previous-competitions.
The winners of the Tower Poetry Competition 2023 with judges Julia Copus, Gail McConnell and Peter McDonald.

LEFT TO RIGHT: Professor Mishtooni Bose, Esther Keeley (First Prize), Liv Goldreich (Second Prize), Elise Withey (Third Prize).

Professor Peter McDonald gives his final address as Tower Student.
Residents, visitors, staff and students cannot fail to have noticed a significant amount of tree work around Christ Church Meadow recently.

We have a duty of care to ensure that our trees don’t represent a threat to the safety of all those who pass through the Meadow and gardens on a daily basis, and that all trees are in a healthy condition to ensure their longevity. Every other year a tree surveyor looks at each tree and makes recommendations as to any work required.

This year has seen much visible work carried out, much of which is pollarding (the technique of regularly pruning trees or shrubs back to a trunk to form a head of branches) of willows around the Meadow. Willows tend to get very brittle with age and can start to fall apart, hence the process of pollarding to enable them to be retained for much longer than would otherwise be possible. Once a tree has been pollarded, the process has to be repeated every four to five years to prevent the new growth breaking away and damaging the trees. There are several big old willows such as the one in the Memorial Garden that are pollarded at height to retain a large tree with good height, and others such as those across the middle of the Meadow that are pollarded at a relatively low point in order to retain the views across the Meadow.

On Ansell’s Field to the west of New Walk, several willows have been pollarded for the first time. This includes two that had developed dangerous leans and a propensity to drop large limbs – they are called Crack Willows (Salix fragilis) for a very good reason. These have been left as high stumps so that they regrow as coppice stools, and a group of five that have been pollarded at around five metres in order to retain some height and hence screening for the buildings to the west.
When the tree surveyor has concerns about a tree’s health and the possibility of internal decay, further investigations are made to find out how badly affected the tree is. For example, the large circa 200-year-old London Plane tree near to the Visitor Centre. This had a small area of visible decay on the northern side which we have been monitoring over the last ten years. In cases like these, a sonic tomograph is used to map out the internal decay to give an equivalent of an x-ray of the tree. The process involves sending sound waves through the tree to a number of sensors; these are connected to a computer that measures how fast the sound travels through the tree trunk and interprets this to give a pictorial representation of the decay. Sadly, the tomograph revealed that the tree had become heavily decayed internally so it was no longer safe to retain, especially as this area has become a popular spot for groups to meet and picnic before visiting the college.

All this work may sound quite negative, but it is essential both for the health of the trees and for the safety of the many people who pass through the Meadow and gardens annually. On the plus side, and to compensate for the losses, we have also planted in excess of 45 new trees including native Black Poplar, unusual oaks, hawthorns, limes and hickories on the Cherwell Path, Dean’s Ham and Ansell’s Field, and a replacement London Plane by the Visitor Centre.
It first struck me that I might be onto something important with Parallel Histories five years ago as I watched a debate we’d organised about the merits of the Balfour Declaration between a Jewish school and an Islamic school.

The atmosphere in the room was very tense. The Islamic school students had just climbed out of their minibus in their white shalwar kameez and topis after a five-hour drive from Preston in Lancashire, drawing some very curious looks on the campus of a large Jewish school in north London.

There was a lot at stake here for both schools. Usually, interfaith meetings concentrate on non-controversial activities (sometimes nicknamed the ‘falafel and football’ approach) but today we were about to debate the hotly contested history of Israel and Palestine, a major cause of friction between Jewish and Muslim communities in the UK.

A Muslim pupil opened the debate by stating ‘we think the British government should be praised for the Balfour Declaration because after 2,000 years of persecution the Jews needed somewhere to be safe’. I knew this was coming as we had been working with both schools and choreographed the opening debate, but even so I was taken aback by the almost tangible emotional release in the room – there was a huge collective exhalation of relief and from that point onwards the rest of the day went swimmingly. The Jewish team argued that the British had betrayed the Palestinians, then we mixed up the schools into new teams and debated the events of what Israelis call the War of Independence and the Palestinians call the Nakba.

I don’t want to exaggerate the impact of the day – at the end of it the Muslim student who had opened the debate said he still strongly disapproved of the Israeli government blockade of Gaza and a Jewish student said she was still looking forward to undertaking national service in the Israel Defense Forces after school. However, they both agreed that they could...
what I’m doing now: he wanted us to be scrupulous about evidence and open-minded about arguments. In fact, the Christ Church connection has been important to Parallel Histories in more ways than one. Our Deputy Editor is Joshua Hillis (2015, History), Robert Satchwell (1980) has implemented the programme in his school in Denmark, and Stephen Dongwook Lee (2012, PPE) is one of our volunteer narrators. I’m also grateful to Roger Morris (1966-69) and Jonathan Simon (1980) for their generosity.

Since those early days we have expanded our geographical reach and product range. Schools in the UK still account for half our usage with the next biggest users being schools in the USA, Ireland, France, and Belgium. Each country has its own hot button topics. Our newest but potentially biggest market is the USA where history in schools has become a political football. It’s now against the law to understand why the other side would think differently, and while that seems like a relatively small concession to make, in the fraught and unforgiving arena of political arguments about Israel and Palestine, it was remarkable.

The Muslim school was the eighth school we have worked with, and the Jewish school was the 19th; we are now working with 750 schools, and we’ll reach 1,000 by the end of the year. The reason for this growth is that teachers everywhere are looking for new approaches to counter the rising challenge of ‘fake news’, ‘alternative facts’, and perceived ‘culture wars’. The skills and attitudes that Parallel Histories teaches – how to evaluate historical evidence and staying open to a range of interpretations and arguments – have become increasingly important. During my time at the House, I tested the patience of my long-suffering tutor Charles Stuart but I think he would have approved of what I’m doing now: he wanted us to be scrupulous about evidence and open-minded about arguments. In fact, the Christ Church connection has been important to Parallel Histories in more ways than one. Our Deputy Editor is Joshua Hillis (2015, History), Robert Satchwell (1980) has implemented the programme in his school in Denmark, and Stephen Dongwook Lee (2012, PPE) is one of our volunteer narrators. I’m also grateful to Roger Morris (1966-69) and Jonathan Simon (1980) for their generosity.

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**“Teachers everywhere are looking for new approaches to counter the rising challenge of ‘fake news’, ‘alternative facts’, and perceived ‘culture wars’.”**

**Michael Davies (1977, History) and Joshua Hillis (2015, History).**

**A regional conference hosted by Lancaster Royal Grammar School brought together eight schools from across Lancashire to debate the history of The Troubles.**
in many states to teach US history in terms that are critical of white European settlers, so we are experimenting with a new programme retelling US history from both European American and African American perspectives.

In Belgium, one of the schools we work with has had several students join ISIS, so they translated our Israel Palestine materials into Flemish as a way to teach a more even-handed approach to the past. In France, the topic of the French Algerian war and the drowning of hundreds of French Algerians in the Seine in 1961 has until very recently been taboo, so it was the first programme our French team made. In Northern Ireland, the sectarian nature of secondary education means that students get different versions of their shared history, so we have a scheme of work retelling Irish history from Unionist and Nationalist perspectives.

When I set up Parallel Histories as an educational charity six years ago, it was to fill a gap – the topic of Israel and Palestine had virtually disappeared from the UK curriculum because teachers and textbook writers couldn’t figure out how to teach it without leaving themselves open to accusations of bias. This situation reached a nadir in 2020 when Pearson, who published the only remaining GCSE textbooks on the Middle East, was forced to withdraw them in face of complaints that they were anti-Israeli, only to have to withdraw their replacements in face of complaints that they were anti-Palestinian. I think it’s a measure of the extent to which our approach has moved into the mainstream that Pearson, the world’s largest educational publisher, last year asked us to form a partnership to write new Middle East e-books using our dual narrative approach.

We are fast growing and over-stretched, and if you’d like to help in any way, in particular with building our operation in the US, or simply would like to sign up for our newsletter, please email me: michael@parallelhistories.org.uk.
Three years ago I made The Beatles sing ‘Call Me Maybe’ using AI.

It was a night of painstaking frustration, involving choosing two-second snippets of sound, waiting 20 minutes for a few further seconds to be generated, then approving or deleting the results. Ten hours later, AI (and I) had generated about a minute of an uncanny new Beatles song.

This only worked due to my extensive musical training, the promise of strong coffee, and an unreasonable urge to keep trying in the face of repeated failure.
“Change is here – and whatever AI’s imminent role in the workplace, understanding the ethics and explainability of machine learning is best done with direct experience.”

Today, AI tools are more accessible and incredibly user friendly. So at my speaking engagements I encourage audiences to explore web-based tools like ChatGPT and DALL·E to get a feel for generated content (alongside the usual reminder that everything typed online is potentially public knowledge!). While generative AI results vary wildly between genius and unprintable, the responses also yield surprising insights into our machine-intertwined future.

To understand why, let’s revisit the start of 2023, where AI caught the public’s imagination with ChatGPT. Simply put, it’s a user-friendly chatbot – a ‘word calculator’ – programmed to understand how humans ask questions. Just like a search engine website or app, users simply type a question, or ‘prompt’, into a box on screen then await a response – but unlike a search engine returning a series of links to other webpages, chatbots return a conversational answer instead.

A huge range of questions or ‘prompts’ provide readable answers – from the simple “Please make a weekly meal plan based on Japanese food” to asking it to write computer code or a legal letter. Generated answers sound impressive and are quite convincing, but sometimes the code isn’t quite right, or the chatbot returns something inaccurate so its responses still benefit from independent verification, just like any piece of information found online.

Most publicly accessible chatbots are trained before we interact with them, making them very user-friendly. But this training stage is critical. Some of my work with the United Nations ITU includes encouraging people from diverse backgrounds and non-technical disciplines to learn more about how AI works. Diverse and well-labelled training data can create more accurate and useful tools. As well as the obvious positive, including everyone as we familiarise ourselves with machine learning, results are also better as diverse workgroups enable fewer gaps in the training data.

I’ll explain why with an image recognition example: let’s train an AI to recognise whether an animal is a cat or a dog. We show it, say, 100 animal pictures, each labelled correctly as ‘cat’ or ‘dog’. This narrowly trained AI can guess whether the 101st picture presented might be a cat or a dog, but it could still only guess ‘cat’ or ‘dog’ because of its training, even when presented with a cake. Though we aren’t expecting this AI to recognise cake (the data did not include it) the response would still be incorrect.

This lack of diverse training data is evident when listening to older AI-generated music; off-the-shelf models skew towards European classical tuning and contemporary pop – for example, results are generally in 4/4 time and have little emotional impact.

I think it’s why we still have the edge over machines when it comes to true creativity. Where machine learning currently tends to be recursive and finite (providing answers based on previous results), humans cannot help but seek out more. We create with all our heart, our knowledge and our sensory memories. Our training data includes what we ate for breakfast this morning; what we heard on the radio; even how we were spoken to as children.

AI performs well in many closed systems; however, it’s yet to generate a moving and musical symphony, at least not without human intervention. So training a machine on Mozart will output Mozart-like phrases – but the results are functional, unchallenging and don’t really go anywhere.

The worry of AI taking our jobs is widely reported, but could it be a positive development? What an opportunity to re-assess society’s understanding of work! The notion of paying for expertise instead of time might sound alien to our ears – but remember
that remote working was still a relatively unusual concept prior to the pandemic.

Change is here – and whatever AI’s imminent role in the workplace, understanding the ethics and explainability of machine learning is best done with direct experience.

AI may be the lever encouraging organisations to measure success in terms of quality of life over financial gain, all while reaping the rewards of a happier workforce. And building a future where people don’t have to work multiple jobs – just to survive – could allow us all the chance to truly realise our creative potential.

ABOUT LJ RICH
World-renowned BBC TV Presenter and Music Artist LJ Rich advises organisations on the future of AI, and gives musical keynotes on how evolving technologies like AI impact our work and life. The next United Nations ITU AI for Good Global Summit is in May 2024. Learn more at https://aiforgood.itu.int.

For bookings or to contact LJ please find her on social media or visit http://LJRich.com.
This edition of Association News is tinged with sadness, opening with a tribute to Simon Offen (1986, PGCE) who contributed so much to Christ Church, as well as to the Association, over many years.

As the current Chair of the Committee, Simon Mungall (1994, PPE), wrote in Christ Church Matters 49, we are keen to increase activities on offer to members of the Association – perhaps through additional events that offer more opportunities for alumni to meet, share memories and exchange views about the House as we approach the 500-year anniversary of Cardinal Wolsey’s foundation. Many Members are actively engaged in person, as this edition’s review of alumni events – as well as the Special Interest Weekend – illustrates. Others keep in touch through other means, engaging with our new community networking site, Christ Church Connections.

If you have not yet created a profile, we encourage you to do so: http://chchconnections.org. This ‘online home’ for House news allows Members to connect with contemporaries, join community groups, view Christ Church photo galleries and sign up for events. It offers opportunities for mentoring, networking and sharing news of publications and career achievements. Along these lines, we are delighted to feature the endeavours of four recent leavers in this edition of Association News. We also look forward to seeing many of you at the Association’s next event – ‘Open House’ – on Saturday 23 September 2023.

CHRIST CHURCH ASSOCIATION ‘OPEN HOUSE’
Saturday 23 September 2023
Booking: development.office@chch.ox.ac.uk

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>11:00 – 12:00</td>
<td>Christ Church Association AGM</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:15 – 13:45</td>
<td>Buffet Lunch</td>
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<td>14.00 – 15.00</td>
<td>Alice in Wonderland and Harry Potter tours</td>
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<td>14.00 – 16.00</td>
<td>River outing for Boat Club members</td>
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<td>14:00 – 16:00</td>
<td>Tea &amp; Croquet</td>
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<td>14:30 – 15:30</td>
<td>Harpsichord and William Byrd recital by Professor Steven Grahl (limited places)</td>
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<td>16.00 – 17.00</td>
<td>Alice in Wonderland and Harry Potter tours</td>
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<td>17.00 – 18.00</td>
<td>Christ Church Boat Club celebrations</td>
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<td>Evensong</td>
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<td>Buttery open to all</td>
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<td>19.30</td>
<td>Dinner in Hall</td>
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<td>21.30</td>
<td>Drinks</td>
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<td>Midnight</td>
<td>Buttery closes</td>
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Last year’s Association ‘Open House’, on Saturday 17 September, where members and their guests enjoyed a day of activities in Christ Church.
Over the next few years, we discovered a lot more about him, not necessarily in the following order.

He loved entertaining and was an extraordinarily generous host. He understood perfectly the correct proportions for a gin and tonic and seemed to have an inexhaustible supply of champagne and fine wines. He was a very good cook, who consistently overestimated the number of courses his guests were capable of eating. In the wrong light he might have been mistaken for Gordon Ramsey but I don’t think I ever heard him raise his voice in anger, even in the kitchen.

He was devoted to Kathryn and shared many of her qualities. They made a wonderful team and enjoyed an unusually harmonious relationship. He was also devoted to Charlotte and Ed and took enormous pains over them. They in return had to put up with constant teasing and excruciating questions about their private lives.

He loved dogs and was much comforted in his final months by Hector, an elegant animal with exquisite manners. He and his predecessor Zac presided over an enormous leather basket near the dining-table, where Simon would occasionally join them for a quick nap if his batteries needed recharging during the course of a demanding evening. But no matter how demanding the evening, by the time one came down in the morning Simon would be hard at work on his computer, washing-up done, and the house tidy once more. His love of order and harmony extended to the garden, which always looked immaculate.

He was notably gregarious, and had an unusually wide range of friends from all stages of his life. He was by nature sunny and kind – and not at all censorious –

A few days before he died, Simon and I spoke for what turned out to be the last time. I was in France, sitting in the sun outside an idyllic chalet after a day’s skiing. He was in the hospice where he spent his final days, his affairs in order, waiting for the end. His voice was weak, but instantly recognisable: agreeably high-pitched, and faintly camp. He was struggling for breath, but there was no hint of self-pity nor anger at his lot. He told me that James, his father, was concerned about the eulogy at his memorial service and asked me if I would consider delivering it. I pointed out that I had known him for less than 25 years and that others were far better qualified. “Yes, but I think they will find it too difficult. It needs an unsentimental sod like you.”

Having settled that, he said he had recently had a long chat with our two sons and that we should be very proud of them. He reminded me that before we knew each other he had considered buying the house nearest to our own, a mere two hundred yards away down a farm track. “I am quite sure that if I had, neither of us would have made it even this far.” His last words to me, before exhaustion finally overcame him, were “Ski like a champion” – the clearest sign imaginable that his sense of irony and love of teasing remained undefeated.

In the event, of course, Simon had bought Carrick House, five miles away from us – so still dangerously close. Kathryn’s children, Charlotte and Ed, were at school with ours, and they soon shared the school run. I think the first impression Simon made on us may have been how punctual and organised he was. But very early on it became clear that he was enormous fun, had an unrivalled ear for double entendre and that we were going to get along fine.

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**SIMON OFFEN** (1986, PGCE)

As the last edition of *Christ Church Matters* reached the final stages of preparation, we received the sad news of Simon Offen’s death, on Saturday 4 February, after a long illness. A Memorial Service was held in the Cathedral on 20 May 2023 and was attended by over 600 family, friends, colleagues and alumni – testament to the high regard and affection in which Simon was held by so many. We are grateful to **Giles Vicat** (1976, Classics) for allowing us to share the tribute he gave at the service.
but he could be fearlessly outspoken if he thought something was unfair.

Simon’s organisational abilities were formidable, but they didn’t always lead to the intended result. One year we were having supper after the children’s school Sports Day and bitching enjoyably about some of the newer parents. Sports Days there had traditionally been relaxed and informal, even scruffy, but we had detected a recent tendency to indulge in competitive displays of ostentatious wealth: Bentleys, butlers, enormous hampers, turning up earlier to grab prime spots – that sort of thing.

The problem was what to do about it. After due consideration and a few more bottles, we came up with two possible approaches: either to turn up in our battered old Land Rover with a couple of straw bales to sit on; or to outdo the arrivistes in vulgarity so spectacularly that it couldn’t be ignored. Either way they would surely get the message.

And that was the last thought any of us gave to the matter, or so we would have imagined. Then, a fortnight before the boys’ final Sports Day at the school, Simon called us. “Do you remember our conversation last year? Well it’s all arranged.” Simon had not gone for the old-Land-Rover-and-straw-bale option. “I’ve hired a pink stretch Cadillac, and it’s picking us all up at 8.00 am. I’ve decided we should all wear pink too”. We arrived at the school playing field to find his staff from Waddesdon waiting by two enormous and very grand gazebos, underneath which was a long dining table with enough glasses on it for a state banquet.

Initially all went according to plan. One of the first to arrive was a donnish figure on an ancient bicycle, his young daughter perched on the handlebars. She jumped down, stomped over to us, put her hands on her hips, and told us we should all be ashamed of ourselves. When Jeremy Paxman passed by a bit later, the look he gave us said something similar. Jeremy Clarkson saw us too and was so impressed that a full two years later he was able to recall the sight, more-or-less accurately, in his *Sunday Times* column: “… someone arrived at my local prep school’s sports day in a pink stretch Hummer. At first I thought they were being ironic. But the gazebo they then built in the car park suggested they weren’t. Honestly, they couldn’t have got it more wrong if they’d turned up in split-crotch scuba suits.” You can imagine how delighted Simon was with that.

But the truth was that we had failed utterly: all day long the Cadillac rocked on its springs while hordes of delighted children tried out its cocktail cabinet and other attractions, meanwhile their parents queued up sheepishly to try and book the chauffeur for...
subsequent events. We were reminded – not for the first or last time in Simon’s company – that spectacular vulgarity can be a lot of fun.

His sense of humour was perfectly attuned to teenagers. On one drive across Cornwall to visit some National Trust house or other, with Ed and our younger son on board, he managed to get ahead of the rest of us. Some minutes later we came round a corner to find the three of them mooning at us from the side of the road. When we arrived at the house, we were greeted by a Youth Outreach Officer, a tall genial man with a beard, but no sense of danger. He made a valiant attempt to ingratiate himself with the 11 mutinous teenagers in our party. “You’re going to love your visit here girls and boys. We’ve got lots of wonderful Tudor games for you to play. For instance, have any of you ever heard of slapcock?” Their instant and unanimous response brought tears to Simon’s eyes.

We never heard much about what Simon had done before we met him, because he was charmingly modest and rarely spoke about himself. The notable exceptions were usually comic or scurrilous, or both. So we knew about the contents of the Vaseline pot found in his hotel room in San Francisco; about unusual receptacles for carrying loose change at Cambridge (they truly do things differently there); about the secret ingredients of the sausages he used to sell in the covered market in Oxford; and about his surprising knowledge of a famous Doctor Who actor. This is not perhaps the place to elaborate further on any of these, but we have all been invited to drinks in Vincent’s later this afternoon...

He had so many friends who justifiably regarded their relationship with him as special that I was wisely advised not to name them for fear of inadvertently missing some out. However, an impressive number of them kindly shared their memories and impressions of Simon, many of them repeatable in church. At school he already displayed many characteristic qualities. He was a fine all-round sportsman, was widely popular, and did enough work to win a place at Selwyn College Cambridge. He also managed to smuggle into the school bus for the Varsity rugger match a case of gin, as a result of which the Warden was obliged to write several stern letters and school trips to the Varsity match were discontinued.

At Cambridge he read history in theory and even obtained a 2.2, but he is most remembered for his culinary prowess, sporting achievements, and generally uproarious behaviour. In the programme for the 1985 Varsity hockey match he claimed with some justification to be studying domestic science – a subject no more on the official curriculum then than now. This was repeated by the Daily Telegraph in its report on the match, which described his performance for the Light Blues as “the greatest act of daylight robbery ever seen on a hockey pitch”. Oxford were
clear favourites and true to form had 23 shots on goal, all of them saved by Simon. Cambridge had three, and scored from two. Two years later he was again in goal for the Varsity hockey match but this time for the Dark Blues. Once again he failed to concede a goal. He may have claimed they were the only two clean sheets he ever managed, but it seems unlikely.

He is also remembered for his driving. On one occasion he upended his car on a bowling green, an incident that caused him some concern as he was transporting a salmon mousse at the time. On another, he misinterpreted an instruction to turn left at a ford and headed downstream to the point where the vehicle had to be abandoned.

He was a leading light – as well as the chef – of a remarkable group of friends centred on St John’s College, who have remained unusually close ever since, and produced a memorable tribute at his 60th birthday party. Their splendid efforts to brighten his declining days – and the efforts of a host of other old friends – greatly moved him.

On leaving school he had worked briefly for Raymond Blanc, and after Cambridge he went back to further improve his culinary skills. One day a dispute arose between Raymond and another apprentice (who went on to become a celebrated chef in his own right). It was decided to settle it by arm-wrestling. Simon gallantly offered to stand in for Raymond and was soundly beaten. Despite this, Raymond maintains Simon was one of the two most talented cooks he ever taught, and he regretted Simon’s decision to take up a career in teaching instead.

Simon obtained his teaching certificate – and his second hockey blue – at Christ Church, and in 1987 accepted a post at Bryanston School. He remained there for six years, becoming Head of History and Master in Charge of Hockey. He seems to have carried on in much the same vein as he had at university, introducing pupils and staff to new levels of culinary excellence, leading the way in all sorts of mayhem and merriment, and once again making a number of lifelong friends among both pupils and staff. One colleague believed that by the time Simon left he had had more impact on the school than anyone else he could remember.

After a period selling speciality sausages and then managing the restaurants and hotel at Waddesdon, Simon in January 2009 joined the Development Office at Christ Church with responsibility for alumni relations. His boss told me it was the best appointment he ever made. Simon’s qualities were perfectly suited to the job, and he quickly set a new standard for alumni engagement in the university, organising an astonishing range of events of high quality. He was subsequently appointed Deputy Director and proved remarkably good at parting old members (and others) from their money. The Boat Club, in particular, benefitted enormously from his efforts – and also the Music Trust. The many wonderful tributes to him on the college website are a measure of the affection felt for him by alumni, and a fund in his memory has already raised more than £200,000, to be spent at his request on graduate scholarships in history.

In 2013 Simon also started helping Vincent’s with fundraising, going on to become part-time Bursar in addition to his considerable workload at Christ Church. He had been a member since his university days, and he loved the club. His boss there also told me it was the best appointment he ever made. Simon’s qualities were perfectly suited to the job, and he quickly set a new standard for alumni engagement in the university, organising an astonishing range of events of high quality. He was subsequently appointed Deputy Director and proved remarkably good at parting old members (and others) from their money. The Boat Club, in particular, benefitted enormously from his efforts – and also the Music Trust. The many wonderful tributes to him on the college website are a measure of the affection felt for him by alumni, and a fund in his memory has already raised more than £200,000, to be spent at his request on graduate scholarships in history.

And then he was cut off, at the top of his game, seemingly loved by all. I can think of no one who was more consistently kind, tolerant, and forgiving or was a more reliable, sensitive, generous, and discreet friend to those in need.

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FRAZER MACDIARMID (2013, THEOLOGY)

Graduating with a DPhil in theology from Christ Church last summer is a memory I will treasure forever. Having lived and studied there over the course of three degrees and eight years, with four of those spent as a choral scholar in the Cathedral Choir, the House holds a special place in my heart.

I currently work in New Zealand’s Office for Māori-Crown Relations. I work to negotiate redress and settlement packages for the government to provide indigenous Māori, as acknowledgement of its historical injustices. From the land, money, and relational resources my department offers, Māori are empowered to heal the intergenerational trauma their people continue to experience and create a brighter future for themselves.
I just finished my DPhil at Christ Church where I focused on artistic responses to long-term disasters. This research grew out of my role as a curator and part of the collective Don’t Follow the Wind that has created a long-term art exhibition of 12 new commissions by artists including Ai Weiwei, Meiro Koizumi, Trevor Paglen and others hosted by displaced residents inside the evacuated Fukushima exclusion zone in Japan. Although the exhibition opened in 2015, it can’t yet be seen by visitors because the radioactive zone remains closed to the public. Despite this, the exhibition acts a living mnemonic of the disaster.

To care for the exhibition, I usually go to Fukushima every three to four months to undertake maintenance on the artwork in the zone. Over the years I’ve witnessed major changes in the environment. In particular, how when humans were evacuated, other

Even from thousands of miles away, I feel a strong pull towards Britain, not least because of the history, friendship, culture and tradition that Christ Church has come to epitomise for me. At the beginning of the pandemic, I had three days to say goodbye to Oxford and everything in it before returning to New Zealand for an unknown period of time.

Given the strong connection I feel towards both countries, I’m excited to be shortly taking up a job working for the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office on the implementation of the new UK-NZ Free Trade Agreement. I look forward to deepening an already strong relationship between our two nations.

While my career has developed away from the theology I studied, I’ve benefitted immeasurably from my time at Christ Church, and hope I’ve benefitted others in turn. I hope to relive fond memories of sunsets over Tom Quad before too long.

JASON WAITE (2016, ART HISTORY AND THEORY)

Curatorial team on a site visit in the Fukushima Exclusion Zone.

Saumya Varma with her board game invention: ‘Sabha’.

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To care for the exhibition, I usually go to Fukushima every three to four months to undertake maintenance on the artwork in the zone. Over the years I’ve witnessed major changes in the environment. In particular, how when humans were evacuated, other
“residents” such as wild boars, monkeys, foxes, and raccoon dogs moved in and have increased in number. I started to realise that while human visitors could not yet come to see the exhibition because of the restrictions, there were already a host of these more-than-human animals who are visitors, neighbours, and participants in the exhibition. Working with scientists, we installed cameras throughout the exhibition site in the zone in order to learn more about the needs, desires, and routines of these more-than-human visitors. We hope to uncover how these animals have begun to transform the human infrastructure in unexpected ways and develop new forms of moving through and inhabiting this contaminated zone. My time at Christ Church helped stimulate many interdisciplinary discussions that deeply inform this project as did the importance of service to the community.

Don’t Follow the Wind is an ongoing voluntary project. Donations are accepted via Paypal: dontfollowthewind2015@gmail.com.

SAUMYA VARMA (2021, SOCIAL SCIENCES)

After completing my Masters in Public Policy, I developed and launched a boardgame on the Indian Parliament called ‘Sabha’. ‘Sabha’ is an edutainment tool aimed at equipping the Indian public at large with knowledge about the functioning of the primary law-making institution in India, the Indian Parliament, in a fun and engaging manner. (Sabha is a Hindi word that refers to a form of public gathering or assembly. The bicameral legislature in India consists of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha – i.e. House of the People and Council of States respectively.) I embarked on this initiative to create a tool to bring citizens closer to democratic processes through education urged by the belief that developing civic accountability is crucial for a functional democracy in India.

I have extremely fond memories of my time at Christ Church. However, the one that stands out the most to me is the Diwali celebration and dinner at Christ Church. I was overwhelmed and touched to see such a joyous celebration of cultural diversity. The bonhomie I received at the College relieved me of the festive homesickness I was feeling for India and I will always hold that close to my heart.

LEONARD SCHWIER (2021, MBA)

After completing my Master of Business Administration (MBA) last year, I decided to continue my academic journey while maintaining strong ties to the business world, with the aim of maximizing the practical application of my research.

I embarked on a PhD program at the University of Duesseldorf, Germany, focusing on investigating the impact of crises on start-ups and the role that investors play in supporting them during such challenging times. To enrich my research, I have formed a research partnership with a leading European Venture Capital firm. Additionally, I have maintained my affiliation with my previous employer, a leading management consulting firm. In this capacity, I engage in addressing strategic priorities for international companies, as well as contributing to internal projects like training programs for new employees.

My time at Christ Church not only ignited my intellectual curiosity to ultimately decide to remain in academia, but it also allowed me to form meaningful friendships which will hopefully last for the rest of my life. I am sincerely grateful for the extraordinary experiences I had at Christ Church, including memorable events such as the Christ Church regatta, numerous formal dinners, and engaging guest nights. I look forward to staying in close touch!

Feel free to connect with me on LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/in/leonardschwier.
Events
March to May 2023

Returners’ Dinner
Over 100 alumni attended the Returners’ Dinner in Hall on 18 March.

Chemists’ Reunion Dinner
The dinner took place on 24 March. This event was a combined celebration of the knighthood of Professor Sir Tony Cheetham (1974) and the damehood of Professor Dame Clare Grey (1983), 50 years of Dr Martin Grossel teaching Organic Chemistry for the College, along with Tony and Martin’s 75th birthdays.
Holy Week

As part of Holy Week devotions at Christ Church, the Cathedral Choir and Frideswide Voices performed J.S. Bach’s *St John Passion* on 4 April. The combined choirs were be accompanied by the Wolsey Ensemble and joined by soloists Daniel Norman (as the Evangelist) and Ben Davies (as Christus).

Gaudy


TOM

On 27 May, members of Christ Church’s Regular Giving Society came to Christ Church for a morning of fascinating academic talks and activities.
AN EVENTFUL WEEKEND
CHRIST CHURCH SPECIAL INTEREST EVENT, 30 MARCH – 2 APRIL 2023

DR SIMON ROTHON (1966, MODERN LANGUAGES)

Just before Easter, for each of the last several years, we have given ourselves a special treat.

We indulge ourselves in Christ Church’s Special Interest Event, a long weekend of intellectual stimulus, sumptuous dining, and the chance to re-live our undergraduate days at the House in a little more comfort and style.

Topics for previous seminars have included the Russian Revolution, the Georgian Era, Shakespeare’s History Plays and the Home Front during WW1. This year we studied Progress and Reform in the Victorian Age. The format of the event is broadly the same each year. We arrive on Thursday afternoon for a programme of nine lectures and discussions running through to Sunday lunchtime. Accommodation is in re-furbished en-suite rooms in Meadows and elsewhere in college, and the days are punctuated by enticing buffet lunches and indulgent evening meals in Hall, the highlight being a gourmet four-course black-tie dinner on Saturday evening. Other treats include champagne receptions in the Upper Library, Evensong in the Cathedral, aperitifs with the Steward in the SCR and an exclusive guided tour of Oxford locations with particular relevance to the topic being covered. Every detail of the weekend is very professionally handled by Emma Timms and the Christ Church Events Team.

The main focus of the event, of course, is the academic programme. This year, under the masterful direction of our Moderator, Professor Brian Young, Professor of Intellectual History at Christ Church, we learnt about how Victorians conceived and evolved the notion of Progress. This embraced Progress in science, religious thinking, historiography, poetry, fiction, politics, social welfare, medicine, transport, eugenics and publishing. An ambitious programme for a three-day event ... but condensed into a series of tightly formatted illustrated lectures in the Michael Dummett Lecture Theatre, with generous time allotted for questions and discussion to follow.

The academic panel was of outstanding quality. Without naming individual contributors, suffice it to say that we had the pleasure of hearing from Oxford University’s most distinguished and prestigious specialists in the Victorian Age. As well as the acknowledged luminaries in the history and literature of the 19th century, we also heard from some of the very best emergent young academics in Oxford’s History and English Faculties, in some cases having the special privilege of previews of their latest unpublished research.

This combination of senior specialists and emerging academic talent is very much part of the format of these annual events and provides a truly informative and inspirational experience.

Since the inception of these programmes about 15 years ago, they have been known by the rather modest title of the ‘Special Interest Event’. May I assure you, however, that this is not a modest enterprise. It ranks among the very best of the short academic programmes currently being offered at Oxford and Cambridge colleges during the Easter and summer vacations.

Christ Church’s event, reflecting its title, is both highly interesting and very special. I can warmly commend future events to you. ■

© LEFT TO RIGHT: Simon Rothon, Graham Sanderson, Sarah Sanderson and Sandie Rothon.
The last two terms have been extremely busy at Christ Church Boat Club and full of highs for both our men’s and women’s squads.

We kicked off January with a training camp for M1, who had their eyes firmly set on the chance of our first Torpids Headship since 2011. With Oxford rivers all flooded, M1 ventured to Norwich to gel as a unit and develop their finesse on the River Yare. Several weeks later, and river levels only rising, M1 and W1 both headed to Gloucester for a camp weekend away. After battling snow and sub-zero temperatures, they were rewarded with pristine conditions.

This took us up to Torpids, with three men’s boats and three women’s boats competing, including a healthy carry over of Michaelmas novices. Although crews went in both directions across the board, our W1 went +2 to end the week in fourth place, and our M1 seized Headship off Oriel, before the halfway point of the course. M1 fought off an early sprinting Wolfson crew to end the final day with clear water, enjoying a fly-by of Boathouse Island in the process.

Several weeks later, we were represented against Cambridge by our university rowers competing in the Women’s Boat & Reserve Races and Men’s Lightweight Race & Heavyweight Spare Race. It wasn’t the year for Oxford crews, but our trialists came back to us full of fitness and experience and hunger to win big in the summer term.

Shortly after the Boat Race, we headed out in Camp to Laias in Spain to soak up the heat and sun; photos of the top crews training can be found on the club’s Instagram. The main target had now shifted to W1, who were gearing up for their opportunity to win a first Headship for Christ Church women. Many miles of both hard work and fun were enjoyed in the sun, and our crews came back ready to stir the pot in Oxford.

Heading in to Eights, W1 established their speed early by winning easily in both their categories at Bedford Regatta, ranking as the fastest club or academic Women’s crew present. M1 and M2 also attended – due to unfortunate injury in M1 and stiff competition against M2, both crews were out early but this allowed plenty of opportunity to watch W1 dominate the field.

Then came the main event – Summer Eights. With W2 almost winning blades, and M1 retaining their second place, the stage was set for W1 to seal the deal on results. After bumping University W1 early in the Gut in day one, our women proceeded to row over with lengths of clear water on all three remaining days, achieving our first ever Women’s Headship.

Celebrations were spectacular, with a procession of boat and with both M1 and W1 celebrating their respective Torpids and Eights Headships this year, and traditional burning taking place after a very merry dinner. We are so proud of both crews for their achievements.

The year isn’t over for our rowers: just gone we had crews finishing first and fourth in the CrewDVIII category of the annual Oriel Regatta, and we are sending a Christ Church – Wolfson VIII composite and Goblet Pair to Henley Royal Regatta on the men’s side, as well as having several women competing at Henley Women’s and hoping to qualify for Henley Royal with university crews.

It has been a year of great success – something which we hope will continue. Thank you to all alumni members – and staff – who support us and have helped this club continue to grow and flourish.
**BOOK REVIEWS**


**STEPHEN DELAY**  
(2013, PHILOSOPHY)

Elijah Newman thinks he is returning home to his wife from a trip when, like an Ivan Ilyich, he instead finds himself unexpectedly thrust before death. Wonder over what might have been, gratitude for all that was, hope for what could perhaps still be, and love of both God and existence—*Elijah Newman Died Today* is an existentialist novella about one man’s thoughts on what matters amid what may be his life’s final moments.

*Adventures in Belief: How I Discovered the Meaning of Life, the Universe, and Everything (Possibly)*, 2022

**REVD CANON PROFESSOR KEITH WARD**  
EMERITUS STUDENT, CHRIST CHURCH

Keith Ward – philosopher, ethicist, theologian, Anglican priest, cathedral canon, and book-writing addict – has spent his life thinking about “the big questions” (and, what’s more, getting paid for it). This philosophical pilgrimage led him from jobs at Glasgow and St Andrew’s Universities in Scotland, to Cambridge University, then on to King’s College, London, followed by Oxford University (by invitation of the Queen!), before moving back to London at Gresham College, Heythrop College, and Roehampton University. Along the way he became a fellow of the British Academy and of a number of academic institutions, gathering up doctorates from various places, and writing more books than your bookshelf can handle. This sounds awfully dull but, according to Keith Ward, it was great fun, and he experienced all these things with a feeling of slight surprise, and with an irrepressible sense of humour. Having retired, exhausted, at eighty-one, Ward could not resist one more book. This is it – a humorous account of his life and thought, especially to show how he developed his own philosophy of personal idealism. It is both a genuinely amusing account of the life of an English academic and a rather profound account of an anti-materialistic and scientifically informed philosophy.

*Overreach: The Inside Story of Putin and Russia’s War Against Ukraine*

**OWEN MATTHEWS**  
(1990, HISTORY)

The Russo-Ukrainian War is the most serious geopolitical crisis since the Second World War – and yet at the heart of the conflict is a mystery. Vladimir Putin apparently lurched from a calculating, subtle master of opportunity to a reckless gambler, putting his regime – and Russia itself – at risk of destruction. Why?

Drawing on over 25 years’ experience as a correspondent in Moscow, as well as his own family ties to Russia and Ukraine, journalist Owen Matthews takes us through the poisoned historical roots of the conflict, into the COVID-19 bubble where Putin conceived his invasion plans in a fog of paranoia about Western threats, and finally into the inner circle around Ukrainian president and unexpected war hero Volodimir Zelensky.

Using the accounts of current and former insiders from the Kremlin and its propaganda machine, the testimony of captured Russian soldiers, and on-the-ground reporting from Russia and Ukraine, *Overreach* tells the story not only of the war’s causes but how the first six months unfolded.

With its panoramic view, *Overreach* is an authoritative, unmissable record of a conflict that shocked Europe to its core.
DEVELOPMENT AND ALUMNI RELATIONS EVENTS 2023

9 September
Board of Benefactors Gaudy

23 September
Alumni Weekend:
Christ Church Association ‘Open House’

24 September
1546 Lunch

29 September
Gaudy (1994-1997)

1 October
Family Programme
Tea

15 – 21 October
New York Visit

November
(Date TBC)
Alumni Drinks
in London

3 December
Family Programme
Advent Service and Reception

Byrd 400
A Byrd in the Library
An Exhibition Celebrating William Byrd

9 Oct - 1 Dec 2023

Curated by
Samuel Teague

Christ Church
St Aldates
Oxford OX1 1DP

Free admission
by appointment only
library@chch.ox.ac.uk
chch.ox.ac.uk/byrd400